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PathPointe Magazine

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"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." **Deuteronomy 6:6-9**

My Mom and Dad did a great job in preparing me for life. I grew up self-assured and confident that I would be up to any challenge life tossed at me. I was taught that I could be successful in any endeavor, as long as I was willing to work for it. I grew up loving my country, believing in God, and believing that as an American, I had the freedom to excel, and nothing could ultimately hold me back, but my own lack of determination. My only danger was in selling myself short, by setting small goals.

And it worked. By the age of 25 I was making more money than Dad had ever made, I drove a newer car, and lived in a nicer house. I know that is not the way to qualify life, but since I was not a Christian at the time, that *was my* measurement of success. Mom and Dad, regretfully did not lead me to Christ, but otherwise they did a great job in preparing me for a prosperous American life in the early 70's.

When Sherry and I became parents, we adopted many of the same values that our parents had instilled in us. On top of that, by that time we *were* Christians, so we were also able to impart the blessings of being children of God to our kids. Just like our parents, we wanted to prepare them for life. In adopting some of the lessons of our parents, we found we needed to modify a few things. The world had changed. Temptations were different. But still, we were able to take the parenting template from our parents, and with a few tweaks, it worked pretty well for our kids also.

For years I have been entreating you to raise your kids the way I was raised, because it worked so well for me. I urged you to raise your kids the way we raised ours, because that also seemed to work out quite well. **But I was wrong.** I was raised to live in a strong and prosperous America; a place where any man could lift himself up with a little hard work and determination. My country was a safe place, a place of good basic morality, so I tried to teach you to prepare your children as I was prepared. In my world, we all pretty much knew where the boundaries were, and most folks stayed within them. I was given a good education in a government school and was taught to be a man, and expected to be one.

My upbringing was quite simple: Always do the right thing, or you will pay a price. Unfortunately, I paid a lot of prices. That "right thing" was confirmed and agreed upon by every authority figure in my life; parents, grandparents, neighbors, teachers, pastors, friends, and my heroes, all rendered the same message. It was a uniform message, and if I ever needed a reminder, the Ten Commandments, teaching honor, respect. and godliness, were clearly posted at home, at church, at school, at our little post office, at the grocery store, and even exemplified in many of the television programs I watched.

I was wrong in instructing you to raise your kids the same way. Sure, the Scriptural principles of parenthood are still the same, but you are living in a totally different world. I was taught how to live in a vibrant economic and moral culture. A love of God and country was a given. Men were men, ladies were ladies, right was right, and wrong was wrong. Your world is not like that. There is very little right and wrong today that society can agree on. I guess that is why many of us older folks feel a bit out of place. You see, I was taught how-to-live in yesterday's America. Your kids need to be

taught how-to-live in tomorrow's America. In other words, you must teach your kids how to live in a crumbling culture. My world was simple and safe. Your child lives in a world of confusion, conflicts, and chaos. You are afraid for them to ride their bikes down the street, and I understand why. Technological advancements, new forms of drugs, and shifts in acceptable morality and behavior are unfamiliar territory for most of us older folks. Singleparent households were a rarity in my day, but they are common place today. My Mom didn't work outside the home, so she was home when I was. Our home was stable. predictable, and pretty much like everyone else's.

I had dozens of positive role models which provided me with guidance, support, and valuable life lessons. Many of those role models lived right on our street, others were older kids at school, characters on television, or in the books I read. Most kids today are not so blessed. I hear about establishing safe spaces for children. I didn't need a safe space, as my whole world was pretty much safe.

Literally, within the last few years, the entire culture in America has turned upside down, and our kids are standing at ground zero. What was right just a few years ago is now seen as wrong. Almost every perversion is socially acceptable. If we don't work hard, our children are going to become victims of this crumbling culture that we live in. I am not suggesting you toss out everything you were taught about parenting, but we live in an entirely different time with more concerns and more dangers, and

for the first time in history, we have a generation of kids who aren't outside exploring the world, creating their own toys, creating their own stories, and building their own fantasy worlds. Unstructured play, rolling around in the grass, or playing in the dirt are crucial to human health and development. We can no longer dismiss them as silly parts of an old-fashioned childhood. Kids need to learn to carry themselves with confidence and find joy in their work and in their world. They need to learn to solve problems on their own and face the childhood giants of their own lives.

We have failed to properly educate our children to cope with the By this, I am modern world. not just referring to our failed educational system, but also to parents and guardians that have likewise failed. Our very definition of education has changed. The real principle of learning is not so much mental as it is moral. Education is not as much about learning to understand and master the world. as it is to understand and master vourself. Modern education makes us proud of achievement when we should seek to be proud of the person we are. We are told





today that modern kids work harder after they are rewarded or praised. True character works harder after it has been justly criticized.

Here is the point. In a crumbling culture we all have to be better. Parents and grandparents have to be better. Teachers have to be better. Preachers and bosses have to be better. If we fail to accept this challenge to be better, our kids will not be prepared to dwell in a crumbling culture. Here are a few things that have always been important in preparing our children for life, but today they are perhaps more important than ever.

Teach Them Who They Are.

It is hard for me to believe that this is even a thing, but today it is. This has been caused in part by the reversal of roles between men and women. Men have been feminized and many women have assumed masculine roles. Teach your little boys to be men. Teach your little girls to be ladies. In a single parent home this can be a real challenge, but it is a goal we should seek.

Teach Them the Concept of Standing Alone.

I never had to worry much about persecution, but your children, especially as Christian kids, will face it. Kids seem to be unwilling to stand up to their peers, unless they are in a group. They refuse to voice opposition to things they know are wrong. As parents, we need to empower them to stand for what is right and to do so respectfully.

Teach Them to Be Thankful.

Gratitude changes everything. It determines your joy in life. If you can always find something to be grateful for, you will always be able to find joy. We live in an entitled society so it naturally seems that gratitude isn't as present in the world today as it used to be. Instead of focusing on what we don't have, we must learn to enjoy what we already have and live our lives now.

Teach Them About Worthy Heroes. In this age of conflicted comic super heroes and scandal-ridden celebrities, many of our children are confused about what truly defines Superhero movies, heroism. comics. and clothes generate billions of dollars worldwide. Good guys defeating bad guys and normal people who end up with supernatural skills and abilities are messages our hearts long for. But if comic book superheroes are the only ones our kids know about, they are going to be short changed in life. Most likely all except our youngest children have already determined that these heroes are not real. Kids need some real

heroes, and it is a parent's job to teach them. Real heroes may not be able to fly through the skies or shoot webs like a spider, but neither can your kids. Give them heroes that did things that your children may grow up to do. I had a lot of heroes growing up, and yes some of them were make-believe, others may have been a bit embellished, but many of them were real.

Teach Them True History.

We need honest teaching of America's history in our homes and schools. Instead of promoting inaccurate and unpatriotic concepts, our schools should teach the true story about our nation's incredible, yet imperfect history.

Teach Them to Obey.

Training your children to obey has gotten a bad rap in this modern world. Even Christian parents are often uncomfortable with the word *obedience*. But as Christians, we need to follow the ways of God when raising our children. It's clear in the Bible that God commands children to obey their parents. And by definition, true obedience is first-time obedience.

Teach Them to Accept Responsibility.

By this, I mean teaching them about duty and responsibility. The simplest way to explain duty to children is "doing the right thing even when no one is watching." Don't do something simply to gain praise or reward, do it because you know that it's the right thing to do in your heart. If you drop your trash on the ground, pick it up even if there's no one around. Do your job and do it well. Honor your commitments. Fulfill your word and always be dependable.



Teach Them to be Modest.

Being modest used to be the norm, but no more. People who dress and act immodestly seem to get the most attention. We used to call it negative attention, but not anymore. For our daughters, we need to teach them that modesty is beautiful. For our sons, we need to teach them that it's important not to objectify women. Modesty is attractive, even in men.

Teach Them to be Kind.

One simple act of kindness can accomplish so much. Nothing feels greater than when someone is kind to you, and nothing gives you more purpose than being kind to others. Kindness isn't just something you try to show whenever you remember. It's a natural, subconscious characteristic that prompts us to look for opportunities to be kind.

Teach Them to Forgive.

Forgiveness is a powerful quality to possess for many reasons. We are expected to forgive one another because God forgives us, despite all of the many sins that we have committed. So, it is only right that we can forgive each other as well.

Teach Them About Faith.

An easy way of explaining to children what it means to have faith is to believe in something even when you can't see or prove it. Faith in God is enough to get us through the hardest of times, giving us hope when nothing else can.

Teach Them to be Humble.

Humility and pride are a little bit more challenging to explain to young children. To have humility and be humble is to be willing to be vulnerable and admit your mistakes. It means knowing that you're not perfect, you are not always right, and won't be the best at everything you do. To be humble is to trust in God's word more than your own knowledge and opinions. Many adults cannot bring themselves to say "*I'm sorry*" because they were never taught the concept as a child.

In Closing: Here is the simple truth that parents need to constantly pour into their kids: You were created by God, in His image, to change the culture and not for the culture to change you. Why would you want to fit in to a crumbling culture? Why would you want to be conformed to this world? God has positioned parents to steward a child's heart

and mind for Him. While the roles change over time, the goal never does. Sadly, America has become a morally and spiritually darker place for our sons and daughters. Yet, the darkness of this age doesn't need to define our children. In Christ Jesus, God has made them for so much more. As the world grows darker, their lights can shine brighter. Our kids need to grasp this reality at an early age and see it lived out in our lives. They need to know that the world doesn't determine who we are or how we live, our relationship with God does. In the hands of our Lord, our children can grow into men and women who might change this world and not become victims of it.

One final thought. Mom and Dad were good parents, but you have a bigger job than they had. You have to train your kids to survive in a crumbling culture. What kind of culture? This kind...

A culture where... "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." II Timothy 3:1-5



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry for over forty-five years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.



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So many of you have responded during our *Spring Share-A-Thon* because God put you in the right place at the right time to be a blessing. Usually, the fastest person wins the race. The Bible says "*time and chance happen to them all.*" This means being the fastest may not matter, and as David and Goliath demonstrated, being the strongest may not win the battle.

The Bible also says that provisions need not flow to the "wise" nor "men of understanding". So, just because you have a great accumulation of knowledge, qualifications, and experience, it does not guarantee you will have success. God's favor doesn't belong only to men of skill, because those who are most



skillful may not necessarily have favor with God.

The good news is you need not be the fastest, smartest, or most qualified to have success. You only need to ask God for His blessing and favor. Then our Lord can put you in the right place at the right time to receive or be a blessing.

If you are struggling to see beyond your situation, remember the story of Ruth. She looked beyond her circumstances and did not place her confidence in them. She did not appear to have much going for her. She was a widow and a Moabitess. She was poor. She could have easily looked at her situation and given Instead of bemoaning all up. these negative points, she asked for favor! Ruth believed in the favor of God and confessed it. Because of this, out of all the fields she could have chosen, she just "happened" to come to Boaz's field. When Ruth trusted in God. He blessed her with favor.

God can do the same for us. He can put us in the right place to be blessed and to be a blessing to others. Our Lord knows what you have and what another person He can put two people has. together for success, whether it is in business, love, friendship, or spreading the Gospel. It is important to look beyond your natural circumstances and trust God to give you success. Only He can put you in the right place at the right time. When you pray confidently and flow in God's grace, He will lead you to the abundant, blessed life He has promised you.

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A Reminding Life

For most of us, the longest phase of parenthood begins when our children leave home and become independent. Our role certainly changes, but our job is not done. For the rest of our days, for good or for ill, we will be living "*a reminding life*" before our adult children. How we honor boundaries, make room in our hearts for in-laws, respond to our grandchildren, and negotiate the inevitable disagreements that arise, will either become a barrier or a bridge.

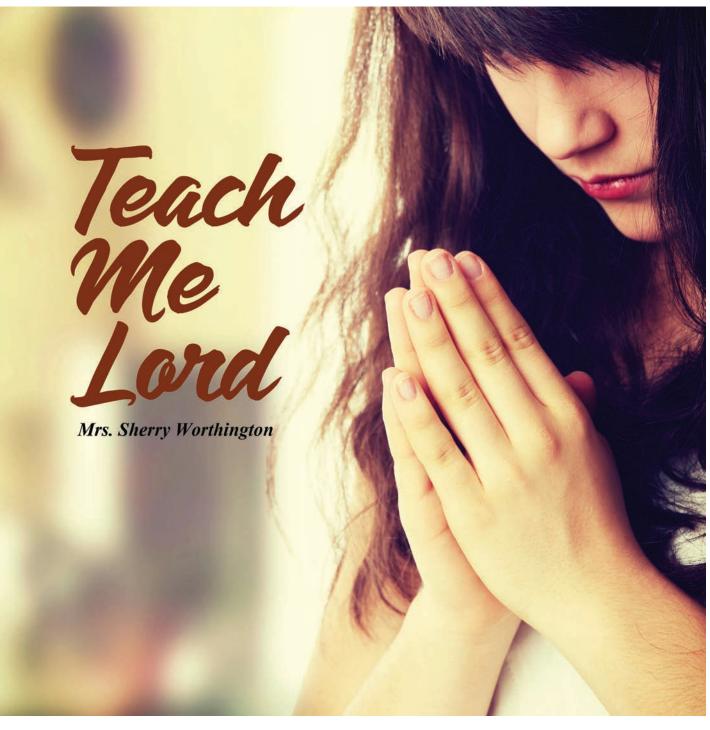
While it should always be our goal to model strength for our children, as we grow older, we then need to discover how to wisely model a gracious acceptance of weakness balanced by persevering determination to still do all we can. And as we do, we work carefully at showing them what it means to maintain our focus on the things that are unseen and eternal.

Sometimes our young children will face problems that we feel ill-equipped to handle. The same is true when they are older. Perhaps these teaching opportunities we have not chosen, but which have still been assigned to us by our wise, loving, good, and sovereign heavenly Father, will have the most lasting influence on our families. In these moments we seek answers together.

I agree with Peter: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;" II Peter 1:13

May our children embrace and not forsake the teaching that we impart throughout all the ages and stages of their lives, including the lessons that come to us in unexpected ways. As godly parents and grandparents, let's embrace the weighty joy of living a reminding life.





I have always been a planner, so it is very difficult for me to slow down and be still. We can all agree that our Heavenly Father has everything worked out in our lives, if we will let Him. I realize every decision in my life is one He needs to control. However, should He have to worry about my daily schedule? Yes, He is concerned about that, too. He wants to guide me in every area of my life. I was lying in bed this morning thinking about everything I needed to do. I began praying to my Father in Heaven, asking Him what I should do. I always feel no matter what I do, it is not enough. My life is full, so I am not complaining, but I need to know how to balance the blessings in my life.

As I lay there praying, I cried out to God for His guidance. My heavenly Father reminded me with His still small voice of a special verse. It was our dear friend's favorite verse. He is with the Lord now. He used to sing this verse in church on occasion.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Teach *me, Lord, teach me, Lord, to wait*" (based on Isaiah 40:31).

I began to pray, "Teach me, Lord. Teach me, Lord. I am waiting for Your instructions. You know how to handle each situation. You know how to handle each need."

As I got up, I began to think about how I should spend my day. Since I am a planner, I like to know what I need to do and how long it will take. I figure I have some control in this way. I am seldom able to carry out all of my plans, but maybe that is the problem. They are my plans. The Lord tapped me on the shoulder and said, "I thought you wanted me to teach you? How can I teach you if you have already made your plans for the day?"

Wow! I was guilty as charged. I said, "Okay, Lord. I am listening. What do you want me to do today?" He then tells me to just plan the day as I go through it. I exclaimed, "Really Lord. Me! Plan as I go? Do you know how hard that is?"

Well, I was sure the first part of the day was already blessed. My husband and I were going to lunch that day. Saturday mornings have been reserved for our time for many years. Our normal routine is to get ready, work for a while, and then go to lunch together. When we get home, my husband studies the rest of the day, and I set about to accomplish as much as possible in the next few hours. I usually have three or four lists, each with different priorities. You notice I used the word "I".

Don't get me wrong, I am a firm believer in lists. It is the only way to keep myself organized. So, yes, we need to have lists, but our Father in Heaven needs to be the author of those lists. Sometimes, I get so focused on my lists that I don't leave room for what the Lord has put in my path for that day. I get frustrated when I can't mark anything off my lists. I have trouble remembering, life is not about your lists. They are just a tool to keep you organized. This was going to be a new adventure for me. So, I waited until we got home and asked the Lord, "What now?" It was a battle. I told Him, "Lord I need to go here, and I need to finish this. I need to write an article, and I have homework to do. I need to study for Sunday School," and He interrupted me.

"Didn't you ask Me to teach you? Didn't you tell Me this morning you did not know what to do? How many times are you going to take control of your time? Your time belongs to Me."

I finally got it! If I will wait on the Lord, He will schedule my day. That doesn't mean sit and do nothing. Someone explained to me that wait in this verse is used in the same manner as a waiter waiting on tables.

"So, Lord, how can I serve you today?" I realized that was the answer I was seeking. How can I get upset if I am doing exactly



what the Lord has instructed me to do? I needed to use each moment of each day as God would direct. That is what the Scripture says.

Those that wait upon, or serve, the Lord shall renew their strength. If we are following His lead, He will guide us through the paths to take. Don't misunderstand. We will still have uphill battles. We will still have uphill battles. We will have difficulties as long as the wicked one is on the loose. But if we wait on our Father in heaven, He will keep us refreshed as a runner is when he gets refreshing water during a race.

Then why do I feel so weary sometimes? The verse also says, "...they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and *not faint.*" How does this apply to me? I don't think this means I will never be tired. If so, I have failed miserably. Maybe it means when we are doing what God wants us to do, we won't be weary in doing His will.

What is the message? I know we need to have a plan sometimes, but we need to be careful that God is the initiator of the plan. Perhaps we just need to stop and say, "What would you have me to do today, Lord?" Often, we say, "This is what I am going to do today," and we leave God out altogether. This leaves us frustrated and feeling like a failure. I so wish I had learned this life lesson earlier. Unfortunately, it is still a struggle.

We must take one step at a time. Let's grow together. So when we get up each morning, ask the Lord what He would have us to do today, or maybe just say,

"Teach me, Lord. Teach me to wait upon you."



Mrs. Worthington has five children and twelve grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.

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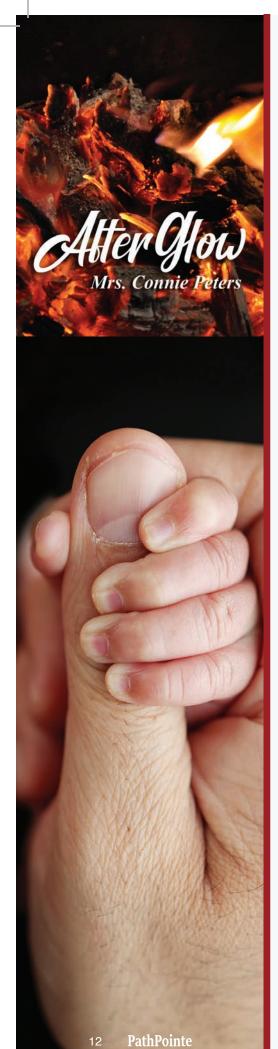
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A Functioning Body

My pastor preached recently that one responsibility of the church is to make opportunity for the members to serve. Afterward, I thanked him for the opportunities of service that he has made available for me. He responded by telling me that without the members of our local church making an opportunity for him to serve as pastor, he would not have had that chance. I thought about how perfectly that cooperation illustrates the church as a body. We all need each other. Our opportunities to serve are opportunities to function in the body.

Have you ever thought about what part of the church body you might be? Some may hold positions of authority as a part of the brain, and others extend God's love supernaturally as parts of the heart. Most of us fit into the category of making up more minor body parts, but even the most minor parts serve a great purpose.

For instance, the smallest bone in the body is the stirrup, found in the middle ear. If it is not functioning properly, partial or complete hearing loss occurs. Without the smallest bone of the church body, the church would not be able to hear and understand that still small voice of the Holy Spirit. If the brain cells can't hear the Holy Spirit, they cannot function as God intends. The smallest bone in the church body is vital to the survival of the church.

The pinky finger is important for strengthening grasp. Without the tiniest of fingers, the body would have more difficulty in reaching out and grasping those who need the help of the church. The church music ministry would be hindered without the pinky playing the melody and the bass parts of the music.

In addition, the little toe aids in balance and propelling us as we walk or run. Without the little toe, the church is in danger of falling as it stumbles with a limp in the Christian walk.

Even our nails are important. Toenails shield the toes from injury. They also assist in helping the body sense movement and location. Fingernails also assist in grasping and fine motor skills. Without the toenails, the church is subject to injury as we walk through the dusty and rocky roads of this world. In the same way, fingernails protect our sensitive fingers from injury as we encounter the world.

Vitally important are even our tiny eyelashes. They keep dust, dirt, and other debris from entering the sensitive eye tissue, protecting the eye from irritation and injury. In the same way, the church's eyelashes protect our sensitive areas from all that the world blows our way. Because of that, they allow us to see more clearly so that we can discern good from evil and light from darkness.

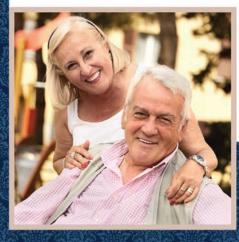
So no matter what body part you as an individual manifest in your ministry, all parts are vital and must maintain health for the church to function properly.

Which body part are you? Thank God for your position in the body and strive to function to your full potential. Ponder that.



Mrs. Connie Peters has two children and resides in Princeton, NC. She serves as an instructor at Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.





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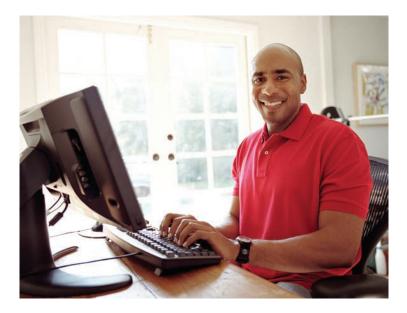
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